

IUB-AAUP Executive Committee Statement on Academic Boycotts (September 17, 2024)

On August 9, 2024, the national American Association of University Professors (AAUP) altered a [longstanding policy](#) opposing “systematic academic boycotts.” A [new policy](#) was adopted that views academic boycotts as potentially legitimate, depending on circumstances that can only be assessed by individual faculty or a collective faculty body functioning democratically. The policy change is controversial and prompted a series of articles pro and con in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (listed below). The Executive Committee of the IU Bloomington chapter of the AAUP (IUB-AAUP) has been asked to take a position on the policy change or to ask the chapter to do so through a vote of the membership. We believe that taking a position is unnecessary and would impede the chapter’s ability to pursue its mission.

Although the IUB-AAUP is an affiliate of the national AAUP and shares a commitment to its central mission of defending academic freedom, the chapter is not bound by specific interpretations of that mission that the national leadership may adopt. In the case of the policy on academic boycotts, the Executive Committee recognizes that there is disagreement on the policy change within both the Committee itself and the chapter membership and that, because this issue has become linked to the specific context of the Gaza War, contending views are strongly held. A vote that imposes a majority opinion has the potential to undermine the common purpose of the membership to build a strong chapter unified in purpose to defend academic freedom against the many challenges that threaten it on the Bloomington campus.

We believe colleagues on both sides of the issue can and should recognize and respect legitimate elements in both positions, even as they align with the argument they find persuasive. We encourage chapter members to be informed about the debate and to express their individual views.

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Related articles published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*:

Cary Nelson, “[The AAUP Abandons Academic Freedom](#)” (August 13)

Jeffrey Sachs, “[The AAUP’s Incoherent New Boycott Policy](#)” (August 16)

Adrienne Lu, “[Why the AAUP Changed Its Stance on Academic Boycotts](#)” (August 16)

Joan W. Scott, “[The AAUP Is Right. Supporting Boycotts is Academic Freedom](#)” (August 20)

Rana Jaleel and Todd Wolfson, “[The AAUP Has Always Defended Academic Freedom. We Still Do](#)” (August 21)

Michał Bilewicz, “[Academic Boycotts Hurt Dissidents Most](#)” (August 27)